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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7002
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4465
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1528
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1441
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4281
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1091
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1995

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SUBJECT: DEFENSE COOPERATION -- CHANGE IN NAVY CHIEF COULD
BOOST MIL-MIL ENGAGEMENT

REF: JAKARTA 2893

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4(b,d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Vice Admiral Sumardjono has replaced Admiral Slamet Soebijanto as Indonesia's Naval Chief of Staff. Sumardjono--who had been serving as Indonesian Defense Department Inspector General--was sworn in by President Yudhoyono on November 7; the actual change of command will occur November 12. Soebijanto's sudden departure is seen as a sign of President Yudhoyono's displeasure. The transition could offer an opportunity to move forward on navy-navy engagement, which lagged under Soebijanto. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT: Soebijanto--who has been Navy Chief since 2005--had been expected to step down in summer 2008 upon reaching his statutory retirement age. The new Chief, Sumardjono, is from essentially the same cohort as Soebijanto and is only 17 days younger, making the appointment a temporary one until a more permanent successor is found. Moreover, Sumardjono had been under consideration for Navy Chief in 2005, but had been passed over by SBY in favor of Soebijanto. In this newest appointment, Vice Admiral Djoko Sumaryono, Head of Sea Security Coordination, and Vice Admiral Didik Heru Purnomo, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, were also reportedly in the running. Both of them are graduates of the Australian Staff College and considered to be relatively pro-Western. Sumardjono's orientation is less clear. All three are three-star admirals.

13. (C) PRESIDENTIAL DISPLEASURE?: The sudden announcement and brusque execution of the change of command suggest an unceremonious ouster. One likely cause is said to be Soebijanto's public criticism of the proposed Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) with Singapore. President Yudhoyono had taken a personal interest in the DCA and had been embarrassed by the stiff resistance it has encountered from the Indonesian legislature, jeopardizing what he had hoped would be a key foreign-policy achievement. Soebijanto's discordant remarks had reportedly deeply angered the President. Soebijanto was also rumored to be on bad

terms with TNI headquarters.

¶4. (C) A BOOST FOR ENGAGEMENT?: The change may open up the possibility of improved U.S. cooperation with the Indonesian Navy. In contrast to his Indonesian Air Force and Army counterparts, Soebijanto had remained cool to engagement with the United States, had shown little interest in procuring U.S.-origin equipment and had caviled over several key aspects of proposed U.S. assistance under Section 1206 of the NDAA for FY2007 and FY2008, including coastal radars. He had also expressed concern about the United States as an arms supplier, asserting it was "unreliable partner," in part because of difficulties in obtaining U.S. spare parts (reftel). It remains to be seen whether Sumaryono is more open to U.S. engagement and assistance, but Soebijanto's ouster may provide a fortuitous opportunity to put this assistance back on track and to move forward in other areas as well.

¶5. (U) BIO NOTE: Previously Sumardjono had served as TNI Inspector General, Commandant of the TNI Command and Staff College, TNI Navy Assistant for Plans and Budget and a commander in the Western Fleet. He is a 1974 graduate of the Indonesian Naval Academy. He was born in Yogyakarta on June 21, 1951. He speaks limited English.

HUME